

# Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge

July 19 – July 25, 2015 [Issue 10]

Photo Credit: USFWS/Claire Revekant

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## Photo of the Week



Photo Credit: USFWS/Zena Casteel

## A Message from Monomoy

An end of the summer lull has reached Monomoy, as the tern colony becomes less and less frenzied with each passing day. After staff watched Monomoy's chicks hatch and take flight, visitors now have the opportunity to see newly fledged American oystercatchers, terns, and piping plovers. Perhaps most intriguing are the large flocks of terns, red knots, and sandpipers staging at Powder Hole and outside the tern colony. Indeed! Staging counts were in order and began 7/22.

It is during this crucial time we encourage our visitors to remain outside the posted areas in order to protect migrating adults and their newly-fledged chicks. Please keep a safe distance and enjoy them from afar!

## 2015 Field Season Update

This is a weekly synopsis of biological activities on South Monomoy, North Monomoy, and Minimoy Islands. Information within this report is subject to change. For up to date information, please contact Refuge Staff.

## Bird Sightings

Ring-billed gull	Common eider
Iceland gull	Red-breasted merganser
Bonaparte's gull	Blue-winged teal
Greater yellowlegs	Green-winged teal
Whimbrel	Gadwall
Barn swallow	American black duck
Tree swallow	Mallard
Ruddy turnstone	Northern Gannet
Killdeer	Horned lark
Black-bellied plover	Saltmarsh sparrow
Semipalmated plover	Magnolia warbler
Semipalmated sandpiper	Common yellowthroat
Spotted sandpiper	Yellow Warbler
Solitary sandpiper (7/24)	American goldfinch
Least sandpiper	Gray catbird
Semipalmated sandpiper	Song Sparrow
Long-billed dowitcher	Savannah sparrow
Short-billed dowitcher	Eastern towhee
Red Knot	Eastern kingbird
Sanderling	Turkey vulture
Dunlin	Peregrine falcon
Hudsonian Godwit	Bald eagle
Marbled Godwit	Northern Harrier
Black skimmer	Osprey
Black tern	Red-winged blackbird
White-winged scoter	American bittern
Black scoter	Virginia Rail

## ***Bird Activity***

### *Piping Plovers (PIPL)*

No nests were lost, gained, or remained active this week after the last nest hatched on 7/19 near Beetle Overwash. Three chicks fledged this week bringing the total number to 58 fledged between 26 broods on South Monomoy Island. Seven chicks between five broods have yet to fledge, but are expected to take flight by 8/11 at latest.

43 PIPL pairs have nested on the Refuge since the beginning of the season. Of these pairs, seven failed to hatch chicks and five failed to fledge chicks, so far. Staff will continue to monitor the remaining broods.

### *American Oystercatchers (AMOY)*

Minimoy was checked once this week on 7/25. During this visit, staff documented a nest with one egg in close proximity to a B-nest found overwashed on 7/4. Staff is unsure whether this is a re-nest or one of the overwashed eggs still being incubated by the parents. Staff will continue to monitor the nest for further clarification, but suspects a third nest attempt based on incubation period. As for the two hatched nests, no chicks were seen but two broods are suspected based on parental behavior and evidence of hatching. One of the brood's chicks was last seen 7/10. North Monomoy was checked once this week on 7/20 in search of missed broods or nests, but no change in AMOY activity was recorded. The two chicks banded from the brood on Broad Creek Island were seen with their parents, having fledged on 7/10.

SMNY revealed quite the surprise on 7/24 when staff saw two chicks over 20 days old at Powder Hole. These two chicks are from a suspected B-nest after nest AMOY 5A was lost on 5/24. The west beach brood was quickly checked on 7/25. Three chicks were last seen from this brood on 7/18. On 7/19, staff attempted to catch and band the chick from the boat landing brood. Although the chick mastered hide and seek that day, staff returned triumphant on 7/20 and banded the chick with PFR YE(8P). As it stands, South Monomoy Island has five unfledged chicks between two broods and eight fledged chicks between four broods, three of which were banded.

If you see a banded AMOY, please report their band to the American Oystercatcher Working Group website at <http://amoywg.org/banding-re-sighting/>.

### *Common Terns (COTE)*

Staff's hard work of recapturing 50 banded birds has finally paid off! On 7/19, nine more banded birds were trapped, bringing the total number of recapped birds to 52.

Among these birds was a COTE banded in 1996 at Mattapoisett, a COTE banded in Wareham, MA as a hatch year in 2000, and a hatch year COTE banded on Monomoy in 1999! Although no plots were taken down this week, productivity continues to wind down within the tern colony. Staff will monitor remaining plots until the last nests have hatched and B-census chicks have fledged/reached 23 days.

Staff continues to conduct kleptoparasitism stints 3 hours/day and notes continued HERG flying around the colony. On 7/22, staff witnessed a Northern Harrier (NOHA) flying over the colony as it was being chased out by the terns. Instances of predation have not yet been observed.

Staff has had difficulty finding young broods in the colony; therefore only two feeding stints were conducted this week on 7/19 and 7/20. The majority of chick diet continues to be sand lance, a COTE favorite. Due to lack of young chicks, feeding stints have been halted for the 2015 season.

In other news, the Refuge plans to burn in the tern colony after the birds have vacated the island. This is a management practice the Refuge undertakes in order to retain optimal nesting habitat for our terns. On 7/24, camp staff started pulling grass for the fire break in preparation of the burn in October.

### *Roseate Terns (ROST)*

On 7/19, the remaining two ROST nests were determined to be abandoned and/or inviable. Subsequently, the two eggs from R7 and one egg from R10 were collected. 9 of 11 ROST nests hatched this year with a total of 13 chicks!

Preliminary resighting efforts began on 7/22 and 7/23 at the north tip of South Monomoy. Four flocks between 260-1250 terns were observed staging. Between these groups, two adult ROSTs and one ROST chick were seen. Both adults were seen with service bands, one of which had a metal field readable. The chick was one of our very own. Additionally, four COTEs with PFRs were resighted. These COTEs were also banded at Monomoy as part of Pam Loring's project. Please refer to Issue 1 for more information on the project and report banded terns to Kate

Iaquinto at Kate\_Iaquinto@fws.gov. Reporting bands is extremely important to researchers tracking the movements of these birds.

#### Black Skimmers (BLSK)

The BLSK nest on South Beach was lost to probable gull predation on 7/23. Only one predated egg was found with no adults around the nest site. On 7/24, Monomoy staff saw one BLSK fly over the colony. Mass Audubon and Refuge staff will continue to monitor for BLSK activity.

#### Least Terns (LETE)

No new information to report.

#### Laughing Gulls (LAGU)

Please see "Photo of the Week" for a look at our LAGU chicks!

### ***Roseate habitat restoration Project***

No new information to report.

### ***Nanotag Project***

Like all other birds, the nanotagged plovers are starting to disperse, providing important insight on their migration movements. Interesting enough, one of the tagged birds was picked up on a tower in Rhode Island on its way down the coast.

Not so far along was the plover with pink flag 50, spotted at the Connection on South Monomoy Island. #50 was banded on Abaco in the Bahamas in February 2015.

### ***Exclosure Study***

No new information to report.

### ***Salt Marsh Integrity***

Staff ordered necessary supplies to install the last waterlevel logger (WLL) out on Minimoy Island, and hopes to do so as soon as the supplies come in. As a reminder, the WLLs record changes in pressure due to atmospheric and water level.

## Current & Upcoming Events

<b>Tern Staging Counts</b>	<b>July 22</b>
<b>MA Coastal Waterbird Meeting</b>	<b>August 4</b>
<b>Beach Clean-Up</b>	<b>August 6</b>
<b>GOMSWG</b>	<b>August 10</b>
<b>AMOY Working Group Meeting</b>	<b>August 11</b>

2015 JULY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	